



Bilotti Named Commission Chairman

Richard Bilotti, publisher of *The Times* in Trenton, was named Chairman of the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission during a Commission meeting in June. He assumed leadership after N. Larry Paragano, the Commission's Chair during its first five and a half years, stepped down.

Bilotti is a New Jersey native who has worked as a journalist in Newark, Alaska, Ohio and in Europe. He attended Rutgers University and Goddard College, and received an honorary Doctor of Laws Degree from Rider University. He served in the US Army from 1966 to 1968.

In addition to his role as a Commissioner and Community Outreach Chair with the Commission, Richard has served as President of the Mercer County Community of Italian American Organizations. He is active in a variety of organizations including the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce, Metropolitan Trenton African American Chamber of Commerce, the Hamilton Partnership, and The Passage Theater Company. He is also President of the Greater Princeton Youth Orchestra and the Trenton Education Dance Institute.

Mr. Bilotti's family originated from Avellino in Campania. Richard continues to study the Italian language and culture through extensive reading on both modern and historic Italy and yearly trips to Italy. For more than five years, he has mentored an Italian conductor from Isernia, Maestro Fernando Raucci, along with whom he often brings musical events from the United States to Italy and vice versa.

Chairman Bilotti made himself available for an interview recently.

Question: *You've been a Commissioner since the NJIAHC's inception. What do you think has been its most significant achievement so far?*

Bilotti: We've done some wonderful things in the area of education with programs at the



▲ Past Chairman Cav. N. Larry Paragano (right) congratulates Cav. Richard Bilotti, new Chairman of the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission at the June Commission Meeting.

state's universities and the curriculum project for elementary and high schools. However, I think the commission's most significant achievement has been to begin the task of organizing the more than 200 Italian clubs in the state and 1.5 million New Jersey residents of Italian descent. There is a lot of work that needs to be done, but if we can begin speaking with a united voice we can accomplish many things.

Question: *Where do you see the Commission spending its time and resources in the next 12 months?*

Bilotti: I think the Commission needs to focus on developing a good fundraising effort, a legislative caucus and developing its website.

Question: *Do you believe the public's perception of Italian Americans has changed since you were a child?*

Bilotti: Yes, I think it has changed to a more positive image. However, the stereotypes

still exist and they are harmful.

Question: *Did you grow up in an Italian American neighborhood?*

Bilotti: Yes, in Harrison, New Jersey.

Question: *What is the most important thing about Italian Americans you would want the general public to know?*

Bilotti: The contributions we have made to the development of the United States. The contributions that not only involve people like Frank Sinatra, Lee Iaccoca and Tommy LaSorda, but all of our ancestors who worked in the Roebling steel mills in Trenton and the farms of South Jersey and the silk factories of Paterson.

Question: *Describe a perfect Italian meal.*

Bilotti: The perfect Italian meal is one that includes the best ingredients, simply but perfectly cooked and eaten with family and friends. ■

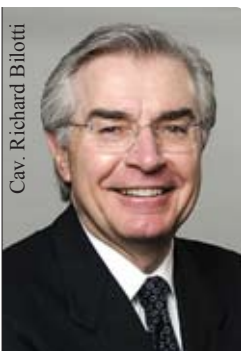


Chairman's Message

Under Larry Paragano's leadership, the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission made great strides in its first five years.

Here are just a few highlights:

- The "Universality of Italian Heritage" curriculum was created for use in all New Jersey public schools, thanks to the guidance of Commissioner and Italian Vice Consul Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari. A major initiative is under way to get the curriculum to all the state's school districts.
- A documentary created by NJN, *A Legacy of Achievement: The Italian Americans in New Jersey*, was spearheaded by The Italian American Heritage Foundation, the fundraising arm of the Commission.
- We sponsored numerous seminars and symposia, plus a yearly Congress that brings together the more than 200 Italian American organizations throughout the state, as well as many publications and events honoring Italian American notables.



Cav. Richard Bilotti

I hope to continue these projects and activities and add another major initiative: the development of a dynamic website. The website I envision would contain the history of the Italians in NJ,

from the Revolutionary War period to the stories of workers at the Paterson silk mills, Trenton's Roebbling steel mills and the farms of southern NJ, to our current roles in government, business and the arts.

This website would invite the 1.5 million Italian-Americans living in NJ to post their family histories to the website. It would give the more than 200 Italian American organizations a place to spread their messages to other Italian Americans in NJ. It would include texts and photos from the Italian newspapers that have been printed in the state, as well as citations to books describing the Italian experience in NJ. ■

Upcoming Commission Events

► **Saturday, October 13, 2007**
4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Chief Justice James R. Zazzali (Retired) to be honored at Drumthwacket, The Governor's Mansion in Princeton.
For ticket information, email David lommarini at iommarinid@aol.com

► **Saturday, October 27, 2007**
8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

4th NJ Congress of Italian American Organizations—"New Jersey Italians In the Arts"

College Avenue Student Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick
To register call 732.932.0670 x13 or email njemas@iahi.rutgers.edu

► **Wednesday, November 28, 2007**
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Meeting of the NJIAHC State House in Trenton

Italian Teachers Association of New Jersey Awards Scholarships

The Italian Teachers Association of NJ (ITANJ) recently honored three recipients of scholarships to a four-week study program at the Università per Stranieri di Siena (University for Foreign Students in Siena, Italy). Two of the scholarships this year were made possible by a generous grant from the NJ Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission. Consisting of a full month's tuition, lodging and a stipend, the scholarships are awarded based on the students' transcripts and essays.

The three *borsisti* are Francesco LoMartire, a senior at Hawthorne High School; Kate Raiti Palazzolo, a junior at the Academy of the Angels in Demarest; and Tyler Hayes, a junior at Ocean Township High School. Also honored was ITANJ's first High School Italian Essay Contest winner,

Cristina D'Amato, who received a prize of \$250.

The Siena Scholarship has been in existence since ITANJ's inception in August of 2000, and for the past three years the Commission has awarded grants to ITANJ to increase the number of students going to Siena.

The essay award was the first given by ITANJ for an essay written in Italian. Cristina D'Amato's winning text was based on the proverb: *I soldi non fanno la felicità* (Money does not bring happiness). Her story was very moving and the ending very a propos to the proverb.

ITANJ is very appreciative of the generosity and support of the Italian American Association of the Township



▲ NJIAHC Executive Director M. A. Re (center) with (left to right): L. Tuttle with her student K. Raiti Palazzolo, A. D'Amato & her student F. LoMartire, T. Hayes with his teacher D. Amato, and essay contest winner C. D'Amato with her teacher A. Borrelli.

of Ocean (IAATO), Falco's Catering, and Michelangelo D'Ambrisi of Michelangelo Tours of Italy for assisting in airline reservations and ticketing for the winning students. ■



NJIAHC & NJ Commission on Holocaust Education — Working Together

The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission has over the past years developed curriculum to present the positive contributions of Italians, which is one of its major goals. The core mission of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education is to promote Holocaust/genocide education. The Commission provides assistance to the schools by developing curriculum, reviewing and recommending materials and implementing training programs. In its curriculum guides and presentations the Holocaust Commission has identified many Italians as rescuers. With these two themes in mind the two Commissions during the years of 2006-2007, worked cooperatively to develop a joint curriculum for schools entitled *Italians and the Holocaust*. The curriculum provides opportunities for the students to learn about the Holocaust and the heroic efforts of many Italians.

In every act of genocide over the past one hundred years it is easy to identify the perpetrators, the collaborators, the victims and the bystanders; those difficult to recognize are the rescuers. Some reasons for this may be that they are few in number, they often keep quiet about their efforts, they fear reprisal from government and/or community and they report, when interviewed, they were just doing what they were taught and what is

right. The Italian people during the time of the Holocaust (1933 – 45) carried out many rescue efforts and saved more Jews and others identified for murder than many of the countries allied with the United States.

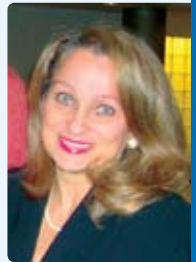


▲ Dr. Paul Winkler with Commissioner Gilda Rorro Baldassari.

It is very important for all groups who stand for the value of diversity and for the struggle against bias, bigotry and intolerance to unite to combat the haters and deniers in the world. This cooperative endeavor and curriculum demonstrate an excellent way to achieve the goal of respecting each other's differences while still being proud of one's own heritage.

For more information about the curriculum or the Commission's goals and other projects, go to www.state.nj.us/njded.holocaust or www.njitalia.nj.gov. ■

Rutgers Fall Line-Up



Mary Ann Re
Exec. Dir. NJIAHC

The NJIAHC has an exciting season ahead of us! Two particularly noteworthy events will be held at the College Avenue Student Center in New Brunswick:

► Wednesday, September 26th

The NJIAHC is hosting an important "Roll-Out" session for K-12 superintendents and principals throughout the state, formally launching its *Universality of Italian Heritage Curriculum*. These stimulating, fully tested and approved lesson plans are ready to roll for children of all ethnic heritages. Our mission? To encourage administrators to support the curriculum's introduction in their local school districts!

► Saturday, October 27th

Our Fourth Annual Congress of Italian American Organizations, "NJ Italians in the Arts," will be emceed by dynamic News 12 New Jersey anchorwoman Janine Strafacci. Accomplished Isernia-born conductor of the Greater Princeton Youth Orchestra, Maestro Fernando Raucci, will treat the community to "A Journey through the History of Neapolitan Songs." Esteemed poet and Paterson native, Maria Mazziotti Gillan, will share, "Reclaiming Our Heritage: An Italian American Writer Speaks." Talented painter-sculptor Anthony Visco will discuss "The Italian American Art of Devotion."

To register, simply call or email us (732.932.0670 x13 njemas@iahi.rutgers.edu). Please spread the word!

Support Your Heritage!

The New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation works to promote a bias-free, positive image of Italian and Italian American people.

The New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission, which is supported by the Foundation, developed a curriculum that is currently available for schools throughout the state of New Jersey. Through education we promote activities and programs that build and strengthen the cultural identity of people of Italian descent. We rely on contributions from our Italian American friends to help us spread the word about our rich culture, heritage and language. Won't you join with us?

Your gift of \$25, \$50, \$100 or more will help us to provide programs and services necessary to accomplish our mission. Of course a gift of any amount is always appreciated.

To make a contribution, please complete the form and return it with your check to:
The New Jersey Italian American Heritage Foundation, 18 Bishop Place, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.
For further information please contact David Iommarini at 732-932-2131.

☐ Yes, I am proud of my heritage and wish to support it!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Daytime Phone Number _____

Email Address _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____



THE NEW JERSEY

ITALIAN AND ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



Bocce Invitational - Operation Shoebox NJ



◀ A highlight of the post-bocce festivities--NJ comedian Joe Piscopo proudly reading Governor Jon Corzine's Proclamation commending the generous and patriotic volunteers participating in this worthy non-partisan effort.



▲ From football to bocce ball! A quartet of Rutgers players, joined by Joe Pesce look-alike, Vincent Caravello—Good sports for a good cause.



▲ A solemn honor guard during the opening ceremonies for the First Bocce Invitational, benefiting Operation Shoebox NJ, June 3rd, Colonial Park, Franklin Township [Somerset County Sheriff Honor Guard and Military Color Guard].



▲ The results of a good day's work—'care packages' filled to the brim by enthusiastic volunteers, ready to be shipped to our servicemen and servicewomen in the Middle East.

The New Jersey Institute of Italian and Italian American Heritage Studies, located at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, is the operational body of the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission for program implementation and administration. The Commission, located in, but not of, the New Jersey Department of Education, was created pursuant to the enactment of P.L. 2001, Chapter 343 C.18A4-42 and signed into law in January 2002. The Institute, a 501.c.3. entity with statewide jurisdiction, is charged with providing services to the public at large, as well as public, non-profit and other public service institutions in all twenty-one counties in New Jersey.

COMMISSIONERS, ADVISORS & STAFF

COMMISSIONERS

Chairperson: Cav. Richard Bilotti

Joseph A. Alessi, Esq.
Dr. Gilda Rorro Baldassari
Dr. Nancy Carnevale
Peter J. Cocozziello
Carmelo Corallo
Salvatore A. Davino
Cav. Frank Gargione
Barbara Lazzaro
Mario A. Marano
Angelo Morresi, Esq.
Cav. N. Larry Paragano
Robert C. Rafano, Esq.
Tina Segali
Dr. Joseph Seneca
Domenico Tancredi
Dr. Marisa Trubiano
Catherine G. Vignale
Dr. Laura Sanguineti White

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Lucille E. Davy, NJ Commissioner of Education
Dr. Edward J. Yaw, NJ Presidents' Council

ADVISORS

Robert Barbera
Frank Campione, Esq.
Mauro Checchio
Dr. William Connell
Rinaldo M. D'Argenio, Esq.
Cav. Paul DiGaetano
Dr. Robert Freda
Mike Genevrino
Dr. Paul J. Lioy
Dr. Eileen L. Poiani
Robert Prunetti
Mary Ann Puccio

STAFF

Dr. Mary Ann Re, Exec. Dir.
Nancy Jemas

New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission

Rutgers University
18 Bishop Place, Third Floor
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Permit No. 157